

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### FALL PREVENTION AWARENESS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, it was 4 a.m. in the morning when I got a call from the West Palm Beach paramedics. They had received a call from my mother's Apple watch—believe it or not—and they rushed to her apartment, and they found her lying on her apartment floor. She had fallen and broken her hip.

I stayed close as she suffered through surgery and hospitalization and rehabilitation. I counted the endless medical bills paid by Medicare and her own personal funds. I watched as my independent mom became fearful of living alone and moved into an assisted living facility.

Mr. Speaker, I will say, there is some very good news about my mom, she is alive and well and adapting to her new lifestyle. She uses a walker and aging has reduced her stamina, but her bridge partners will tell you she still has a very sharp mind.

Listen to this. Her surgeon told me her recovery at her age, which was 96 at the time of the fall, was an exception, that most her age, after a brutal injury, quickly sundown to death.

Mr. Speaker, you may ask why am I telling this story? Because tomorrow is the first day of fall, and not only are the leaves turning, but it marks the start of Fall Prevention Awareness Week, a nationwide effort to raise awareness that falls are preventable, and also, to bring awareness to fall prevention strategies and resources.

Mr. Speaker, after my mom fell, I started hearing story after story from friends and colleagues about their own personal experiences of people who had fallen, and you know what I learned? Falls are the most frequent cause of injuries and injury-related death among people over 65.

There are 36 million falls a year in people over 65 here in America, leading to broken bones and broken spirits, and 34,000 of those becoming deadly. The cost—this is an amazing figure—the cost to the American health system is \$50 billion a year from injuries related to falls. That is billion with a b.

Here is the most important message I have today: Falls are preventable. I am going to say it again: Falls are preventable. There are simple things that seniors can do with assistance from their doctors and their family and their friends and caretakers to stop the falls before they happen.

Here are some of the top tips from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Make sure that medications

don't have side effects that can cause dizziness or loss of balance, stay hydrated, get eyes checked every year. And because most falls happen in the home, make critical changes like installing grab bars, clearing tripping hazards, and make sure that the rugs are flat on the floor. If necessary, use mobility aids like walkers and canes, when needed, even in your own home.

There are also simple exercises that seniors can do to improve joint strength, especially in the ankles, to help improve balance and stability.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that the House Labor, Health, and Human Services' budget plusses up fall prevention research and programs in the 2023 budget. I am hoping that the Senate will go along with that.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all my colleagues to recognize this week as Fall Prevention Awareness Week and help me spread the word: Falls are preventable. It is on all of us to keep our loved ones on their feet.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Louisiana (Ms. LETLOW) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LETLOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express disappointment and frustration of thousands of my constituents after our effort to bring H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, to the floor for a vote, which was delayed this week.

The Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset are unfair, bureaucratic deductions that cheat nearly 2 million Americans out of their earned Social Security benefits.

These rules impact our public servants—the teachers who educate our children, firefighters and police officers who keep our communities safe. At a time when we desperately need more men and women to enter these fields, knowing these penalties exist deter them from pursuing these occupations.

WEP and GPO have been in place since the 1980s and Congress has ignored this problem for decades. I want to be clear, we are not trying to create new entitlement programs or forgive debt. We are trying to ensure that retirees obtain the benefits that are rightly theirs.

Just last week, I received a letter from Carla Moreau, a teacher from Bunkie, Louisiana, who retired after spending 23 years in the classroom.

Carla recently lost her husband, Gerard, to cancer at age 60. However, due to WEP and GPO, she is ineligible to receive his Social Security survivor benefits simply because she was a teacher. If Carla had chosen any other profession outside of public service, she would automatically receive those benefits just like any other American would.

Mr. Speaker, Carla's story is just one of the many from across my district and around our country, and each one

is heartbreaking and unjust. Not a single day goes by that I don't hear from a constituent who is impacted.

□ 1030

Since I took office over 1 year ago, almost 3,000 people have contacted my office to ask us to fix WEP and GPO—by far, the most calls concerning a single issue.

High inflation and record price hikes continue to plague our Nation, and now, by refusing to address WEP and GPO, this Congress is essentially telling hardworking Americans that they must either not retire, reenter the workforce, or find other means to make ends meet.

It is astounding to me that this administration and the Democratic majority spend trillions to forgive student loans, bail out private industry, and create new government programs, but the people impacted by WEP and GPO continue to be ignored.

My colleague from Illinois, RODNEY DAVIS, brought forward H.R. 82 to repeal WEP and GPO. I am a proud cosponsor of this bill, along with nearly 300 other Members of this House.

Since the 117th Congress convened, we worked together as Democrats and Republicans to find a way to bring this bill to the floor for a vote. After nearly a year and a half of being denied, we worked to have it placed on the Consensus Calendar, a process that could force the bill to come to the House floor.

Only when we were on the cusp of forcing a floor vote and had 300 Members ready to support this measure did Democratic leadership take action to remove the legislation from the Consensus Calendar and essentially bog it down in a backlog.

Mr. Speaker, it is unconscionable to me that some would play procedural games and deny this body the opportunity to vote on a bill that fixes such an obvious wrong.

What am I supposed to say to the people like Carla Moreau? That despite the fact that we were sent here to solve problems, we will just kick the can down the road?

Is that really the answer that we are okay with relaying to her and the 2 million Americans who are adversely impacted?

Mr. Speaker, I was sent here to represent the people of the Fifth District of Louisiana, and today, I can say with grave sincerity that their voices, along with 2 million other Americans, continue to be silenced.

Instead of my standing behind this podium today, we should be doing the will of the people and bringing H.R. 82 to the floor for a vote.

#### STUDENT DEBT CANCELLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. PRESSLEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in solidarity with the